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TAGS: [NATO](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KV](#)  
SUBJECT: NATO: THE DAY AFTER KOSOVO INDEPENDENCE

Classified By: Ambassador Victoria Nuland, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: The North Atlantic Council (NAC) met in a special February 18th session to discuss the situation in Kosovo following the February 17th Declaration of Independence by the Kosovo Assembly in Pristina. General Craddock, SACEUR, and Admiral Fitzgerald, Commander JFC Naples, briefed NATO's Permanent Representatives (PermReps) via video teleconference on the latest significant developments and the current situation in Kosovo particularly emphasizing KFOR activities in support of the Kosovo Police and UNMIK. Following the briefings, NATO's North Atlantic (NAC) negotiated (with some difficulties from the Spanish) a one page agreed Allied statement reaffirming NATO's commitment to Kosovo under U.N. Security Council Resolution 1244 and KFOR's responsibility to ensure a safe and secure environment for Kosovo and all of its population. END SUMMARY

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NATO KFOR Performing Well  
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¶2. (C) General Craddock and Admiral Fitzgerald briefed the NAC that the situation in Kosovo remained stable and that KFOR had not only increased its visible presence in urban areas, patrimonial sites, and the Serb enclaves, but also at the border crossings and along the administrative boundary line with Serbia. Further, all of NATO's regional headquarters (Sarajevo, Tirana, and Skopje) and the Military Liaison Office in Belgrade are in communication with each other and so far no incidents have been reported. Describing KFOR's current posture as "robust" he said the troops "are performing their job well" in support of UNMIK and the Kosovo Police following three "minor" incidents in the North involving incendiary devices, but without any casualties. Lastly, Fitzgerald said that KFOR would continue its heightened posture over the next 24 hours in order to prevent tensions from escalating due to any wild celebrations involving gunfire or anti-independence demonstrations. So far, he reported that the celebrations have been restrained and there have been no refugee movements. The CMC also reminded PermReps that the next step for the military authorities is a NAC decision following input from the military committee on the implementation of the 120-day Bridging Directive that would allow KFOR to adjust its current posture in Kosovo in order to take account of the changed circumstances.

¶3. (C) Admiral Fitzgerald also highlighted the ongoing high level visits to Kosovo Serb areas by Serbian officials from Belgrade, including Serbian Minister for Kosovo Samardzic,

saying that KFOR continues to work with UNMIK and the KPS to ensure freedom of movement. He noted that the visits were expected to continue over the next several weeks, but that the messages from these officials have so far been calming and reassuring to K-Serbs over their continued presence in Kosovo. It is unclear at this point what the position of the new Kosovo government will be regarding future such visits as they imply a challenge to Kosovo sovereignty, a point noted by the Lithuanian and Spanish PermReps during their interventions. U.S. Ambassador Nuland, however focused on the positive aspects of these visits as a demonstration of the Ahtisaari principles in action, noting that the visits send a positive message to Serbs about their ability to remain in Kosovo and are consistent with the Ahtisaari plan and its call for Belgrade's right to monitor Serbian affairs in Kosovo.

¶4. (C) Admiral Fitzgerald also updated PermReps on KFOR reserves reporting that the Italian operational reserve battalion continues to reinforce Multi-National Task Force North, particularly in the Mitrovica area, and that both the UK and German operational reserve battalions have increased their readiness in the event they are called on by COMKFOR. Fitzgerald noted that the German operational reserve battalion will deploy to Kosovo in March to replace the Italians.

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NAC Statement Runs into Spanish Sensitivities  
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¶5. (C) During the drafting of the agreed Allied statement, Spain argued that any statement should focus on elements that "unite us and not divide us" and that they had serious reservations on the declaration of independence and on the process. Their aim was to avoid any collective recognition of Kosovo and therefore called for revisions in the draft statement that might imply recognition by NATO authorities such as referencing the request from Pristina for NATO's continued presence and the deletion of NATO's continuing involvement in "furthering the development of a stable, democratic, multi-ethnic and peaceful Kosovo". Spain received support from Romania for changes. Greece and Slovakia pushed for getting to consensus, while also noting their sympathy for Spanish positions. The UK pushed back against the idea that NATO was implying recognition with the text saying that NATO did not have the authority to force recognition, but needed to be careful about sending the right message and on setting the tone for stability. The UK PermRep noted that while he had flexibility to change some elements, London could not accept the deletion of "democratic and multi-ethnic Kosovo" from the text since it was enshrined in the Ahtisaari framework.

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U.S. Forges a Compromise On the Statement  
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¶6. (C) U.S. Ambassador Nuland then introduced a compromise proposal bridging the gap for Allies by removing direct references to the Pristina request or welcome of KFOR, highlighting KFOR's continuing mandate under UNSCR 1244, ensuring NATO's support for standards implementation, and preserving NATO's objective to help in the development of a stable, democratic, multi-ethnic and peaceful Kosovo. The U.S. proposed changes gained rapid traction among other Allies, (Norway, Germany, Hungary, France, Italy, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Turkey, The Netherlands, Poland, and Denmark) who viewed it as a good way forward to address Spanish and Romanian concerns. Greece and Slovakia also supported the U.S., and Romania confirmed that it could accept the changes. Spain, however, initially remained opposed saying that while Madrid could accept almost all of the text as proposed by the U.S., it still could not accept any mention of a "multi-ethnic and democratic Kosovo" drawing a parallel with the ongoing discussion at the EU meeting of political directors. Not until after a break for lunch which provided the opportunity for consultations, a SYG phone call to the

Spanish Foreign Minister where he emphasized the importance of having an Allied statement, and another UK intervention on sending the right messages did Spain finally accept retention of the contentious language in the text.

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